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PRESIDENCE DES COMMUNAUTES EUROPEENNES

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PRESIDENCY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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NEDERLAND 1991

MEMORANDUM 46TH UNGA

This memorandum is circulated concurrently with the speech delivered to the General Assembly on 24 September 1991 by Mr Hans van den Broek, on behalf of the European Community and its member States. It forms an integral part of that speech.

TRANS-ATLANTIC RELATIONS

Over the past year, the European Community and its member States have intensified their relations with their transatlantic partners in all fields. Consultations with the United States have been further developed at the highest level. Following the interest expressed on a number of occasions by the US administration in the development of the Community's role, the President in Office of the European Council together with the President of the Commission have met regularly since February 1990 with the President of the United States. Themeeting held in November 1990 confirmed this trend and was followed by the adoption of the Declaration on EC/US relations. Through this Declaration EC/US relations have been endowed with a new and long-term perspective that will serve to strengthen transatlantic solidarity.

A similar Declaration, with similar objectives, has been agreed upon with Canada and intensified consultations have taken place in the meantime.

CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The European Community and its member States were among the first to support the democratic process initiated in the Soviet Union. They fully support the endeavours to accelerate the reforms undertaken and to ease the Soviet Union's integration into the world economy. The process of liberalisation underway represents for the European Community and its member States a sign of hope and they most sincerely desire that it will continue.

The European Community and its member States have with great satisfaction and relief witnessed the collapse of the coup in the Soviet Union in August 1991. They welcomed the reinstatement of President Gorbachov and the restoration of constitutional order and democratic freedoms. They believe that these events create new opportunities for the new leadership at union and republic levels alike to press ahead with reforms.

It is up to the leadership and people to seize these opportunities: only they can mobilise the vast resources of their own country and realise its inherent wealth. The European Community and its member States do not underestimate the difficulties of the situation in the USSR. With a view to helping the USSR to overcome such difficulties and to contribute to the success of the reforms, the European Council in Rome expressed in a concrete way the readiness of the European Community and its member States to extend and strengthen economic and financial cooperation between the European Community and the Soviet Union. In this spirit, the European Community is also ready to consider talks on a major agreement between the European Community and the USSR.

The European Community and its member States welcomed the independence of the Baltic States and congratulated them on the resumption of their rightful place in the

BURMA

In May 1990 the Burmese people indicated in free elections their desire for a democratic multi-party system. At the time the European Community and its member States welcomed this outcome and called on the military authorities to transfer power without delay to a government designated by the newly elected parliament. The European Community and its member States deeply regret the failure of the Burmese authorities to initiate a democratic process, to respect internationally acknowledged rules of conduct in the field of human rights, to cease the harassment, detention and house arrests of leaders of the opposition (among them Aug San Suu Kyi) and to free political prisoners. In the light of the Burmese Government's continued repressive policies the European Community and its member States reduced economic and trade relations to a minimum, suspended all non-humanitarian aid programmes and agreed upon a total ban on arms sales to Burma.

The European Community and its member States call once again on the Burmese Government to respect the mandate laid down by the Burmese people in May 1990 and to introduce a democratic multi-party system. They are prepared to re-establish constructive relations with Burma, including a resumption of development assistance programmes, once Burma fulfils its obligations in the field of human rights and democracy.

EAST TIMOR

The European Community and its member States continue to follow developments in East Timor closely, which remain a source of concern. They view the authorisation given to the special rapporteur on torture, to visit the area, favourably. They reiterate their support for the contacts between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General and welcome in this context that the two countries have agreed on the terms of references of the proposed visit of the Portuguese parliamentary delegation to East Timor. They express the hope that this visit will help to create an atmosphere conjusive to a just, comprehensive and internationally accepted settlement in line with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including the respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms, giving full consideration to the legitimate interests and aspirations of the people of East Timor.

BANGLADESH

The European Community and its member States welcomed the organisation of free and fair parliamentary elections in Bangladesh last February, as well as the adoption of a parliamentary system by the Government of Bangladesh in August 1991. They find it encouraging that the two main political parties in Bangladesh have moved quickly towards agreement on these issues. These steps towards guaranteeing democracy and accountable government are of great importance to the future of Bangladesh.

The European Community and its member States also welcome the Bangladeshi Government's pragmatic approach to the financial and economic problems facing the country, as well as their commitment to sound macro-economic management. They congratulate the Government for having taken decisive measures to deal with the devastating effects of the cyclone of April 29. They reaffirm their commitment to support the new democratic Government of Bangladesh in its efforts to implement reform and reconstruction.

NEPAL